

## **GREENSBORO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

**Wednesday, July 11, 2007 – 6:00pm**

**Glenwood Recreation Center – 2010 S. Chapman Street**

**PRESENT:** Paul Brown, Marc Bush, Robert Douglas, III, Ken Free, Rose Marie Ponton, Randy Scott

**ABSENT:** Lori Galbreath, David Hoggard

**STAFF PRESENT:** Paula Boykin, Candice Bruton, Jenny Caviness, Courtney Hemphill, Peggy Holland (GDOT), John Hughes, Bonnie Kuester, Mike Moye, Lane Newsome, Darious Oliver, Dale Purvis (intern), Marcie Richardson, Mike Simpson, Laurie Thore, Mary Vigue (Budget & Evaluation), Chris Wilson

The regular meeting of the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Commission was held at Glenwood Recreation Center. Robert Douglas, III, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the June 13, 2007 Commission Meeting were approved as submitted.

### **Recognition**

Bonnie Kuester, Director, recognized the Parks and Recreation July Employee of the Month, Jerry Williamson. Mike Moye, Cemeteries Superintendent, accepted the recognition on Williams' behalf.

### **Glenwood Recreation Center Presentation**

Paula Boykin, Glenwood Recreation Center Director, presented the Commission with historical information about Glenwood Center and programs currently held there.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Sportsplex Request for Proposals**

Lane Newsome, Sportsplex Manager, informed the Commission that the Sportsplex soccer program request for proposal's were received from Greensboro Youth Soccer and Soccer Ops and are currently being reviewed. The Commission will be informed of the selected proposal as well as the Fitness Center proposal during the next Commission meeting.

Newsome stated that the Sportsplex 12 and under girls basketball team won the AAU National Championship and the 17 and under girls junior Olympic volleyball team placed fifth for the national championship.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Proposed Park**

Ron Wilson, associate with Starmount Company, informed the Commission that approximately 78 years ago Starmount Company was founded in Northwest Greensboro by Blanche Sternberger Benjamin who was the guiding force behind Starmount Company for many years. Wilson stated that the Starmount Company and the Greensboro Junior League are pursuing an opportunity that would benefit the entire community.

Wilson requested that the Commission approve the naming of a parkland donation of 4.5 acres and if they are so inclined to also recommend the acceptance of this proposed park to City Council. This property is located on the southwest corner of West Friendly Avenue and Green Valley Road and includes a house built in the 1900's. Preservation Greensboro has identified the house as worth saving and has suggested that the preservation of the home

may add historical value to the community. The grandchildren of Mrs. Benjamin and Board of Directors would like to honor Mrs. Benjamin by offering this land as a passive public park. The Benjamin family requests that the property be named The Blanche Sternberger Benjamin Park. The property will be conveyed in its entirety to the Junior League. The Junior League, who will utilize the house for office space, will convey the parkland to the City of Greensboro following re-zoning. Wilson stated that he was by no means asking the Commission to become involved in the zoning case that this request was limited to the two conditions proposed by the family, passive use and naming for Mrs. Benjamin to include a park sign indicating such. Wilson explained the parcel using a visual aid. He noted that the entrance to the site is proposed for Green Valley Road, eliminating the entrance on Friendly Avenue. When asked recently why Greensboro needed another 5 acre park in the city he responded that with all of the development over the course of the years to come he felt that people would appreciate seeing green space and a stand of trees in this location.

Don Vaughn, attorney, stated that he is representing those who are present to support the request for the property becoming a passive park. Vaughn stated that there have been numerous meetings regarding this property. The Starmount Farms community is asking to be involved through the entire process.

#### **Action Taken**

**A motion was made by Rose Marie Ponton and seconded by Ken Free for City Council to approve the park proposal under the above mentioned conditions. A vote in favor was unanimous.**

#### **Naming Request**

Candice Bruton, Strategic Planning Administrator, stated that in April 2007 the Commission recommended City Council to approve an acre and a half land donation. This donation went before City Council in May 2007 and they recommended Parks and Recreation accept the deed for this donation. The land was donated by John Marks and is located off Martin Avenue east of HWY 29 in northeast Greensboro. Bruton then turned the presentation over to John Marks.

Marks distributed the resume of Edgar S. Marks along with maps showing the property location. Marks stated that the Marks family has been in Greensboro for over 100 years. The donated park land would have an entrance along Martin Avenue and also an entrance from Robin Woods's sub-division, which is being built by Marks. Marks rebuilt a bridge crossing a creek in order to gain access to the park. Marks stated that he believes this area needs park land and trails. Marks stated that when re-zoning his properties he informs everyone in the area. In this case, he knocked on approximately 200 doors in the surrounding neighborhood and did not have one opposition.

Marks requested that this park be named Doctor Edgar S. Marks Park, in honor of his father. Dr. Marks was a doctor in Greensboro for many years at many locations, including Cone Mills.

Bruton added that this area would be classified as a neighborhood park and be considered a passive park.

Marks introduced his father Dr. Marks.

Dr. Marks stated that now-a-days for a child to honor their parent(s) is unusual and thanked his son for the honor. Dr. Marks stated that the Marks family became established here after the turn of the last century. Marks was born in a house on Greene Street where the parking deck is now located. The family moved in 1924-25 to Fisher Avenue and he attended Spring Street Elementary, Central Junior High, and graduated from Greensboro High School. Dr. Marks has spent most of his life in Greensboro and was in practice for over 40 years. He was in scouting with the father of Robert Douglas, III, Commission Chair.

Douglas stated that Dr. Marks is very well known and very well appreciated. Douglas stated that he has read the qualifications stated in the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Naming Facilities Policy and this request well fits those qualifications.

Marks requested that the Commission approve this land donation as the Doctor Edgar S. Marks Park.

#### **Action Taken**

**A motion was made by Marc Bush and seconded by Randy Scott to approve this donated land be named the Doctor Edgar S. Marks Park. A vote in favor was unanimous.**

#### **Greensboro Youth Council**

Jenny Caviness, Greensboro Youth Council Coordinator, informed the Commission that the Greensboro Youth Council (GYC) increased their membership this year by over 20% with approximately 300 participants. The GYC volunteers worked over 13,122 hours in the community. The estimated value of the volunteer time was over \$261,000. Donations and grants totaled over \$37,000. The GYC Carnival income was over \$70,000, which is an increase of \$6,000 from the previous year. Caviness stated that the GYC total contribution to the City of Greensboro was \$368,136.65.

Caviness informed the Commission that Ghoulish volunteer letters will be distributed soon. Caviness thanked the Commission for their continued support.

#### **City Arts Request for Proposals**

John Hughes, Youth and Community Programs Manager, stated that request for proposals (RFP's) are being prepared for the City Arts dance program. The RFP's will be mailed this Friday to approximately ten vendors with a return date of August 3, 2007. Once the RFP's are reviewed an update will be given to the Commission.

#### **Barber Park**

Chris Wilson, Parks, Gardens, and Program Support Manager, stated that Barber Park was closed on June 15, 2007. Impacted soil was found during renovation construction and traces of contaminants were found. Since that time city staff has been working with outside consultants to make sure that we come up with the correct methodology and correct procedures to make sure the area will be safe. Wilson continued stating that the first initial test was done this past Monday and results should be in next week. Given the results, there will be a better indication of any corrective measure that may be needed. It is hopeful this will be done in a timely manner but still making sure we keep the public safe. Air quality testing was done, including the Simkins Pavilion and park maintenance building which came back positively with no sort of major issue.

Rose Marie Ponton, Commissioner, inquired as to whether all areas of the park will be tested.

Wilson replied stating that the initial test will reveal whether that's necessary.

Randy Scott, Commissioner, inquired as to where the contaminants came from.

Wilson replied stating that Barber Park was previously a waste water treatment plant and perhaps contaminants came from something that was brought on site. It would be hard to determine because it was so long ago. The contaminated dirt was not found near the surface. At this point it is known that environmental standards were followed during initial development. When the site development moved forward there was coordination with the county and state that it was within compliance; however with finding trace amounts we still need to make sure that we are overly cautious as we talk about the citizens and make sure that there might not be other areas with heavier contaminants.

Scott inquired about the surrounding homes and the effect this may have on them.

Wilson replied stating that at this point we have no reason to believe there would be any concern outside of Barber Park.

### **SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR**

- NONE -

### **DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS**

Bonnie Kuester, Director, reminded the Commission of the upcoming Citizen Board Member Forum that will be held the first weekend in August. Kuester invited the Commission to attend the Bayou Bash in the Bog.

Kuester stated that David Hoggard, along with other citizens, is interested in a different approach other than the recommendation being followed in terms of renovations at War Memorial Stadium. Kuester stated that Hoggard continues to work on this different approach, but that she does not have an update on where they are in the process. City Council approved the CIP that includes the War Memorial Stadium renovations.

Mary Vigue, Budget and Evaluation Analyst, stated that the CIP was adopted along with the budget. Everything that's in the CIP is not going to be completed and a lot of CIP items are unauthorized bonds. The War Memorial Stadium is included in the CIP based on 2/3 bonds and the amount is based on the original renovation proposal. City Council will decide how much to go out for bond.

Marc Bush inquired if there is any urgency from council.

Vigue replied stating that she believes this will be done a timely manner.

### **COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS**

**Marc Bush** inquired about the impact on the budget for the two proposed parks presented earlier.

Kuester replied stating that funds are not available for playground equipment and perhaps the Field Operations Department would maintain the property. There are opportunities for neighborhoods to apply for and receive grants that speak to possibilities in these parks, but it could be several years.

Bush thanked the Parks and Recreation Commission and staff for their efforts with the NC Amateur State Games, which was a phenomenal success. This was the fifteenth plus year for these games and this year was the second highest participant rate at more than 14,220 participants in the state games.

**Ken Free** inquired as to how many staff works with the neighborhood playground program.

John Hughes replied stating we have 14 playgrounds with two supervisors at each playground.

**Rose Marie Ponton** stated that she attended and enjoyed the State Games Opening Ceremony and thanked Marc Bush and the Greensboro Sports Commission for their efforts with that event.

**Randy Scott** thanked Ron Harris, Brown Center Director, for his efforts on a first annual bizarre held at Brown Center with an expectancy of 100-150 people but ended up with over 400 people.

**Paul Brown** commended Marcie Richardson, Executive Assistant, for her efforts with Parks and Recreation Commission.

**Robert Douglas, III** congratulated Rose Marie Ponton, Commissioner, as the recipient of the Life Time Achievement Award from Greensboro Beautiful. Douglas thanked David Hoggard, Commissioner, for serving as Chair at the previous Commission meeting.

With no further business Douglas adjourned the meeting at 7:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcie Richardson, Executive Assistant  
Greensboro Parks and Recreation